

## NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD

**Speaker:** Rev. Dr. Cecil Clements

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**Scripture:** Luke 1:37, Matthew 19:26, Job 42:2, Mark 14:36

Many years ago, when I was in the choir at Emmanuel Methodist Church in Chennai, we did a song called “Nothing is Impossible”; this became the name of the concert that we did. It was such a rousing song, a song that brought faith into our lives, a faith that told us that we believe in an omnipotent, all-powerful God for whom nothing is impossible. As we think about this phrase “Nothing is Impossible,” we can sometimes bring it down to a magic wand that we can use in our lives, because God is all powerful – to be able to use it ourselves and say: Okay, this impossible situation will go because God is all powerful.

I thought there needs to be a little bit of caution of trying to understand how God’s omnipotence works in our lives. As I was mulling over the sermon last night, trying to get my thoughts in order, the story of the cocoon that the little boy saw came to mind. You probably all know the story.

A little boy watching a cocoon, saw it shaking, and then noticed that it was beginning to open up a little. He saw this little butterfly inside, desperately trying to come out. He had compassion on it and just opened the cocoon so that the butterfly could emerge. And the butterfly just flopped out. It couldn’t move because, as his mother pointed out when she saw it, the butterfly uses the time to break the cocoon to strengthen its wings so that when it comes out eventually from the cocoon, the wings are strong enough to allow the butterfly to fly.

I thought about that! Here was a little boy who had more power than the butterfly had in trying to break the cocoon, or so it seemed in his limited understanding. So when he used that power it didn’t help. In fact, it was detrimental to the life of the butterfly after that. His mother though, was wiser; had more knowledge and a better understanding of the situation and so she was able to tell him and explain to him what had happened because of what he did.

Thinking about that, I realized that it was so much like us and God, because it takes more wisdom than we have in dealing with the situations that we face. But God is all powerful and all wise as well. And so He knows when He can use His infinite power in the situations that we face. We don’t! And sometimes we stop with this phrase and say, “Nothing is impossible with God, and so I believe that this particular situation will change or it will go away. Or I can pray and have enough faith and God will work this great power that He has into my impossible situation.”

What happens when that doesn’t occur is that we begin to get disillusioned and our faith takes a beating. Then we kind of sink down into a place where we say: I’ll just meander around. The last time I had that kind of faith believing that God is all powerful, it didn’t work for me. I thought it would be good for us to understand the context in which this phrase is used so that we can better understand its application in our lives. “Nothing is Impossible with God.”

Let’s look at four areas in the Bible where this phrase occurs.

### I. **Luke 1:37 “For nothing will be impossible with God.”**

What is the context for this? The angel appears to Mary. *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to Mary. And then the angel says to Mary, “Don’t be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.” And Mary is surprised by this because the angel goes on to say, “You will conceive in*

*your womb and have a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." Mary listens to all this, and when the angel pauses, Mary says to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And then the angel goes on to say, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you and for that reason, the holy Child shall be called the Son of God." Then in v.37, "For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary's response to that is, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

The context in which these words are used is when Mary looks at the angel and says, "You're saying I'm going to have a child called Jesus. But here's a very practical problem: I'm a virgin; how can this child happen?" To that query, the angel says, "Nothing is impossible with God!" To Mary's question about how this can take place physically within her when she has a very practical problem with what the angel is saying. NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD.

**II. Matthew 19:26 *Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."***

*The context here is the Rich young ruler who came to Him saying, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" and Jesus then goes on to say, "You shall not commit murder, do not commit adultery and all of these things." And the man says, "All these things I have kept. What am I still lacking?" Jesus says, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions, give to the poor and you'll have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me." Now when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. Then Jesus turned to His disciples and said, "Truly I say to you. It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this statement, they were astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus answers, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

So, looking at the dilemma that the disciples were saying, "He's a rich man; he has everything. And you're saying that it is difficult for him to enter the kingdom of God. Then who can? And Jesus responds and says, "Correct! With people it's impossible, but not with God. God is capable and has the power to save a person even in this kind of a situation."

**III. Job 42:2 *"I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted."***

You know the story of Job. He was a wonderful, godly, righteous man, and God kind of threw down the gauntlet when Satan walked up and talked about Job following Him because He blessed him. And God gave him the power to do a lot to Job without taking his life – really saying that the blessings are not what keeps Job following Me or knowing Me as God, but just his knowledge of who I am and his relationship with Me.

Satan then takes away all that he has in harsh and hurting ways that leaves Job sitting by himself, nursing his sores. His wife saying, "Listen, why are you holding on to this God. Forsake Him and die."

Then four friends come along and they try and be compassionate to him. But then they find fault with him. Finally, in ch. 31:35 Job says, "Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written." He's calling out to God and saying that I want an empire to look at what's happening here and tell me if this is all right.

Then God answers him. In ch. 41, He first talks about the leviathan and He says, “who can understand? Can you even go close to this thing that has been created? You are so finite; you’re so limited in the things that you do. And yet, you are able to ask Me a question?” then He says, “Who then is he that can stand before Me? Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.”

And God kind of gives Job an understanding, a breadth of all that He has done, that makes Job respond in ch. 42: Job answered the Lord and said, “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore, I have declared that which I do not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask you and you instruct me.’ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore, I retract and I repent in dust and ashes.”

In the midst of all that has happened in his life, at the end of these 40 chapters where we see Him struggling, having his friends find problems and telling him that this is possibly the reason the this has happened – all from human finite understanding. And then God comes and blows it all away, all the arguments. And He says, “There’s a dimension that I operate in that is far greater than you will ever know.”

And in the light of what God says, almost surprisingly, Job moves back and he says, “I’m sorry! I retract everything I said for I spoke without understanding.” Look at his words. He is talking about himself: Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge. Therefore, I have declared that which I did not understand. Therefore, I retract and I repent in dust and ashes.

In the middle of all this, when he starts by saying: I know that You can do all things, but I retract from You in asking why this has happened? For I don’t have the big picture of what was going on.

#### **IV. Mark 14:36 *Abba! Father! All things are possible for You.***

This is Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. You know that prayer; it’s an anguished prayer, it’s an anguished time, a difficult time for Him. He’s struggling. He knows what’s coming to Him. He knows that Calvary awaits and it’s weighing heavily upon Him. And then He says in v.36, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You: remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Jesus is saying, “Father, I know that everything is possible for you; even this situation, You can take it away from Me.” And He asks God to do that. and yet He says, “Nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done.” God, You can do everything. Nothing is impossible for You. You can even remove this situation from Me. But Abba, not My will but Your will be done.

Nothing is impossible with God. With God, all things are possible.

As we look at these four areas, I’d like for us to just glean from them a principle, and then see how it can be applied to our own hearts in our understanding of God being omnipotent.

#### **JOB**

What’s the principle here? God allows difficult, life-threatening, destabilizing situations sometimes in our lives to teach us, grow us, and increase our trust and faith in Him. God allows into our situations, things that completely overwhelm or destabilize us. But it’s a teaching moment, it’s a moment where He uses that situation to help us to grow in our faith and in our understanding of Him; to move past a particular situation and still keep our trust in Him, which Job did.

So, how do we use that in our own lives?

Look at the situations in your life that may be seemingly overwhelming. Maybe it's a job situation that you're in. or maybe it's your health – just being overwhelmed, destabilizing and you're crying out. Maybe it's a relationship that's fragile, threatening to break. Or maybe it is just your well-being. And you're railing on God, saying, "Lord, why is this happening to me? You can do all things. Nothing is impossible for You. Why are You not working in my situation?"

If we were to apply what Job went through, and beloved, I speak this as gently as I can knowing that these situations are not easy, that they are difficult. Job's response was: I'm going to retract. I'm going to retreat, repent. The response for us is: Lord, I don't know. I don't understand. But Lord, teach me. Teach me how to go through this situation. You're not taking it away; you've allowed it into my life. now Lord, teach me what my response should be. How do I navigate through it? How do I walk through this? How do I see Your omnipotence in this situation, not in the way that I want it to happen, but in the way that you use Your omnipotence for Your children?

### **MARY**

Situation: "How can this be seeing that I'm a virgin?"

Principle: When God asks us to do seemingly impossible things that are beyond our capabilities, remember it is not beyond His.

Examples: Maybe God is asking you to forgive somebody and you're saying, "I don't have it in me, Lord; I really don't." or maybe, even, God is saying, "Give whatever, everything you have, or give out of the little that you have." And you're saying, "Lord, I just have this. I'm just about making it to the end of the month." And God is saying, "I'm saying to give." Maybe God is saying to go somewhere and you're saying, "Lord, I can't. I don't even have the wherewithal to go there." Or God is saying, "Would you follow Me?" and you're saying, "Lord, I'm not equipped. I don't have what it takes to do what you are asking, Lord."

Maybe while you just think about the 'how', you're forgetting that God can supply what you need to accomplish what He is asking you to do. When we have reached the end of our capabilities, our capacity to do something, it hasn't in any way stopped what God wants us to do, because He can equip you to do what He wants you to do, even though you don't have it in yourself.

### **RICH, YOUNG RULER**

Principle: When who we are, what we've done, what we have, makes us think we are beyond God's saving grace, remember that with God, it is still possible.

Examples: Sometimes we think that the sins that I have committed are so grievous, so great, that I just cannot in any way be saved. I am just beyond redemption. Or maybe, you've walked away again for the nth time. Or maybe you've gone back towards some addiction. Or you think that you're too wicked a person for God's saving grace.

When we look at the rich young ruler and the disciples questioned: Then who can be saved? Remember Jesus says to you too: With you, it's not possible, but with God, it is possible. God can still save. He has the power to do that.

### **JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

Principle: Even though God can do all things, He will not if it is contrary to His will and purpose.

Examples: Maybe today, God is asking you to do something very, very different from what you want to do; and maybe you're pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, I can't do it. Just take away this thing Lord. it's impossible." And maybe your response in this moment should be to respond the way Jesus

did and say, "I know that You can do all things, Lord, and I know that You can take it away. But nevertheless, let Your will be done in my life."

So, in wrapping up, as we look at this phrase "Nothing is Impossible with God," what can we end with? How do we view God's omnipotence in our lives every day?

- 1. We don't always have the big picture, so don't judge God on this one incident.** Look at Him through the lens of your own history. Because something that happened, and you say, "I trusted God. He could have easily saved me, or saved the situation. It didn't happen, so I'm just going to move away." Don't! that's one incident. Look at the history that you have with God. See the number of times that He proved Himself over and over and over again, and stand on the lens of history in your life rather than misappropriating the omnipotence of God in your situation.
- 2. When God asks you to do something beyond your capabilities, He will equip you.** When God asks you to do something beyond your capacity, your capability, your resources, your strength, He is the One who will equip you.
- 3. When you've done something that you think is beyond redemption, remember that God specializes in 'beyond redemption' cases.**
- 4. If God has allowed or is allowing you to go through a difficult situation that He could have prevented, or can prevent, then trust Him because He has a greater purpose.** He is infinitely wise and so, trust Him through it.

The bottom line is trust Him. He knows what He is doing all the time. Nothing is impossible when you put your trust in Him. So we look at all that's going on in our lives through the eyes of faith, knowing that nothing is impossible with God when we put our trust in Him.

Amen.